1: McGee E-5 (1894-1895)1898 NU31 Seri NU31



Seri race-sense and Seri race-type no less delicate than that between the stressful action and the stress-shaped structures of the tribe, and while the inception of both type and feeling may be ascribed to the isolated environment, it seems manifest that both have interacted constructively and in cumulative fashion through a significant process exemplified more clearly by this tribe than by others thus far studied. At the same time, analysis of the harmony between type and sentiment indicates that the lowly Seri are actually, albeit unconsciously, carrying out a meaningful experiment in stirpiculture—an experiment whose methods and results are equally valuable to students. The Seri gymnastic and the Seri stirpiculture are in close accord, in that both are conditioned by initially dilatory yet ultimately intense action; the results are equally accordant in that the one conduces toward individual vigor and the other toward a vigorous and distinctive stirp; while the excellence of the methods (viewed from the somatic standpoint) is attested by the magnificence of the product. Now, comparison of the stirpicultured Seri with contemporary tribes shows that the desert-bound folk have attained unequaled somatic development, and suggests that the intuitive stirpicultural processes have been rendered peculiarly effective through the persistence of that tribal isolation in which the processes apparently took rise; so the race-sense of the Seri may be regarded as the product of long-continued stirpicultural processes, initially shaped by environment, yet developed to unusual degree by somatico-social habits, kept alive largely through continuous environmental interaction.

Summarily, the Seri are characterized by noble physique, by peculiarly swift and lightsome movements, by great endurance coupled with capacity for vigorous action, by animal-like symmetry and slowness of maturation, and by various minor attributes combining with the major features to form a distinctive race-type; and they are still more conspicuously characterized by an acute race-sense which holds them apart from all aliens. At first sight, several of their somatic attributes seem incomparably primitive, yet analysis of the attributes in the light of certain laws which they exemplify better than other peoples thus far studied indicates not so much a lack of development as an excess of growth along purely somatic lines, with a correlative defect of development along demotic lines; and when the lines of growth are traced to the sources and conditions, it becomes fairly clear that the aberrant development of the tribe is merely the reflection of a distinctive environment operating (evidently) throughout a long period. In brief, the somatic interest of the Seri seems to center in the remarkable adjustment of the tribe to a peculiar environment—an adjustment of such delicacy as to imply interaction throughout many generations.